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Russia Seeks $33M From Arrested Construction Boss Over Border Defense Scandal

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Vladimir Lukin. **@sudrfkursk**

Russian prosecutors are demanding 3.2 billion rubles ($32.6 million) in damages from the head of a construction company in the southwestern Kursk region, where Ukrainian forces occupy swaths of Russian territory, media outlets reported Tuesday.

Vladimir Lukin, CEO of the Kursk Region Development Corporation, was arrested last month on charges of abuse of authority. Initially, he was accused of misusing 173 million rubles ($1.7 million) allocated by the government for fortifications along the Russia-Ukraine border.

However, the Prosecutor General's Office has since filed a lawsuit alleging that Lukin and several associates inflated the cost of construction contracts to a greater extent than previously reported, according to the pro-Kremlin newspaper Izvestia.

The lawsuit claims that between 2022 and 2023, 23 contracts worth 3.2 billion rubles were

signed under the construction company's leadership. Lukin and his deputies, Igor Grabin and Snezhana Martyanova — both also in police custody — allegedly received 805 million rubles ($8.2 million) in kickbacks.

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According to the lawsuit, companies involved in the project "created the appearance of performing construction work," which remains incomplete. It added that the December 2023 deadline for completing the contracts was repeatedly postponed on questionable grounds, "significantly reducing the Kursk region's defense capability against the aggressor."

Russia allocated 19.4 billion rubles ($198.1 million) from 2022 to 2023 for fortifications in the Kursk region, according to the lawsuit. State media confirmed the Prosecutor General's Office's demand for 3.2 billion rubles in damages.

A total of 10 individuals and seven companies have been named as defendants in the case, the state news agency TASS reported.

The controversy comes after Ukrainian forces launched a surprise attack against the Kursk region on Aug. 6, breaching two lines of defensive fortifications that reportedly cost 15 billion rubles ($109 million) and took nearly three years to build.

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